

News Release
MEDICINE LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

For Immediate Release

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**MEDICINE LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE CELEBRATES THE
100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM
AND A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION**

To mark the 100th birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System, Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge will join with hundreds of other refuges around the nation as part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Refuge Centennial Celebration on March 14, 2003.

Everyone is invited to visit Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge for an Open House and Centennial Celebration. Come and enjoy refreshments and birthday cake, displays, the refuge quilt, a time capsule dedication, and tours of the newly-remodeled office. At 2 PM, actor/historian Arch Ellwein will present a living-theater portrayal of A Visit with Teddy Roosevelt.

When: March 14th, 2003, from 1 to 4 PM.

At 2 PM, enjoy A Visit with Teddy Roosevelt living-theater program.

Where: Refuge Headquarters (1 mile south, 2 miles east of Medicine Lake)

Hundreds of other refuges around the nation will be celebrating along with Medicine Lake Refuge on March 14th. Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida will lead the celebration as the first National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1903. Many of the refuges will dedicate time capsules containing items such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife artifacts, refuge history, essays from school children on the importance of their local refuge, and seeds and pelts from the species that live on refuges. Additional activities will be ongoing throughout the year at refuges across the nation in celebration of the Centennial.

This national celebration is truly a special occasion to celebrate a century of conservation and the many people who have made the Refuge System a success, said Ralph Morgenweck, Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mountain-Prairie Region. Refuges help protect threatened and endangered species, provide recreation to thousands of Americans, help the economies of local communities, and provide wild places for future generations to enjoy- come help us celebrate this year!

On March 14, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first National Wildlife Refuge at Pelican Island, Florida, to help protect a colony of brown pelicans. Over the past 100 years, more than 540 National Wildlife Refuges have been established in the United States. The Refuge

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System is the world's only network of lands dedicated primarily to protecting wildlife and their habitats. Refuges comprise over 94 million acres of land in all 50 states, with a refuge within driving distance of most major cities. From tiny Pelican Island, the Refuge System has grown to encompass hundreds of unique, spectacular, and truly wild places that harbor diverse species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
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